

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. The claims and Abstract of the Disclosure have been have amended to remove reference numerals.

**Conclusion**

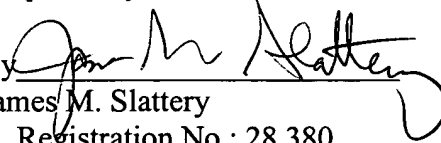
Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited. An early and favorable first action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact James M. Slattery (Reg. No. 28,380 ) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: July 20, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By   
James M. Slattery

Registration No.: 28,380

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH,  
LLP

8110 Gatehouse Rd

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant

JMS/smt